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THE
Pathway to Eternal Life:

BEING

The Last SERMON of that Eminent Divine
Mr. T. WILLIAMS, B. D. lately deceased



Licensed according to Order.

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Heb. chap. 9. ver. 27.

And it is appointed unto Men once to die, but after this the Judgment.

MY Beloved, feeling my own decay I have chosen this serious and reasonable Text, which perhaps may be my last, to mind you of your latter Ends, that you may reflect on the shortness of Life, and the uncertainty thereof, as to its continuance; and to prove it short and momentary, we find it in many respects compared to things of the least duration, things that as it were only appear, and then suddenly fade away and vanish from our sight. Holy David says, *Thou hast made my life as it were a span long, and mine Age is nothing, in comparison of thee.* In other Places it is compared to Smoak that vanisheth away; to the Flower that fadeth; and to Grass that is cut down, and withereth; and St. James, who spake by an excellent Spirit, says, *Our Life is but a vapour*; and yet this short momentary Life, is, by the Creator of all things in his Eternal Wisdom, given us as a Talent to improve on this side the Grave; that in doing well we may purchase Crowns of Glory

glory and Immortality, and a Life that never shall have end, in which we shall enjoy pleasures, pure, and unmixed with sorrows; Joys that fade not away, but abide for ever; though here we are Strangers and Pilgrims, and have no tarrying City, but travel through a Wilderness and Vale of Tears; yet beyond the Grave, when Time shall be with us no more, we shall have fixed and durable Habitations, Mansions not made with hands, in the highest Heavens, shining with Honour and sparkling Glory, which Christ, who laid down his precious Life, and shed his rich Redeeming Blood for mankind, is gone before to prepare for all those that love his Name, and obey his Gospel.

That Death is the certain Lot of all Mankind, daily Experience shews us, by the dropping off of our Friends and nearest Relations, one where or other, unto the Grave, adding a new Cause of Sorrow to mourn at their Funeral, and spread doleful Cyprus over their Herfes, till it comes to our own turns, when matured by time to follow them, lie down within the Chambers of Dust, there to remain till the Morning of the Resurrection, when the loud Arch-Angel's Trumpet shall rouse us from our long

silent Revo^{te}, to meet the Lord of Glory, would
coming in the Clouds of Heaven to judge Cares,
us, and accordingly pronounce the Sen-World
tance of Reward or Punishments, as we here
have done Good or Evil in the Flesh. blessed

Death is intailed on us for the Sin and Terrou
Disobedience of our first Parents, and there Wave
is no Pledge nor Reprieve from it, nor do Cana
we know any certain limit of time when it tiess?
will snatch us hence. The tender Blossoms Shado
as often fall, as the ripe mellowed Fruit; the with
Lamb as soon as the aged Sheep, goes to the venly
Slaughter, and however it falls out, we must are th
at one time or other all pass through the such
Valley of the Shadow of Death. faint

Now some who have heard of the un- Y
speakable Joys of Heaven, may say I am way
desirous to depart, and be with Christ; but Dea
yet the grim King of Terrors, standing Ma
between, startles and amazes them into this dot
farther Consideration, how to come to the ron
blessed Shore, where there is so great a ple
Gulf between them and it, as to be lead wa
Captive unto his gloomy Chambers, and in of
their fright, say with the Psalmist, *My ve
Heart is sore pained within me, and the pains h
of Death are fallen upon me; fearfulness and to
trembling are come upon me, and horror, Psal. P
116. 4, 5. I see the Shore where I willingly r
would*

Glory would be out of the Troubles, Sorrows,
 judgements, and Vexations of this tempestuous
 World which is at enmity with me; but Oh!
 as where is a great Gulf between me and that
 blessed Elizium; I must be tossed on a boi-
 n and terous Sea, and be wrecked by dreadful
 Waves and Tempests: Is there no way to
 or do *Canaan*, but through the desolate Wilder-
 ness? Must I go through the Valley of the
 Shadow of Death, to the Land that flows
 with Milk and Honey; the new and hea-
 venly Jerusalem, which is above? These
 are things contrary to Flesh and Blood, and
 such as will make the stoutest Courage
 faint and tremble.

Yet certain it is, say what they will, the
 way to true Life lies through the Gates of
 Death; it is irrevocably appointed unto
 Man once to die; and therefore, to anti-
 dote our selves against the Fears and Hor-
 rors of Death, and the Confusion and Per-
 plexity of a Dying State, is so to live al-
 ways, as if we were knocking at the Gates
 of the Grave; and then the Grave shall ne-
 ver have power to prevail against us to our
 hurt; always considering, when we come
 to die, it is the determinate Order and Ap-
 pointment of God, in whom we live, and
 move, and have our Being; he places our
 Souls

Souls in these earthly Tabernacles of Clay and we are only here Tenants at Will, liable to be dispossessed at Pleasure; *it is appointed for all Men once to die*, and that it is an irrevocable Decree of Heaven, that we must all walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, Why should we, like Men without Hope, fear any Evil? For the Lord is with the Righteous, and will guide them safely through the Terrors and Affrightments that they are naturally attended with: Then shall they rest from their Labours, and their Works shall follow them, to crown them with everlasting Joys, and a peaceable Serenity to all Eternity; then shall they look back on the Dangers they have past, with Joy, and sing Praises and Hallelujahs to him that liveth for ever and ever.

Let us not then look upon Death, as some strange unexpected Accident befall us; for may we not hereupon say with the Apostle St. Paul, *That no man should be moved with these Afflictions; for your selves know that we are appointed hereunto*, 1 Thes. 3. 3.

It is an undoubted Mitigation of any Sorrow or Affliction, to know that God hath appointed it as an unavoidable Lot and Portion of all Man Living; so that on this

Account

Account we may say with the Psalmist, *I will fear no Evil, for thou art with me*; for certain it is, all the Evil in Death proceeds only from an evil Life: For a good Life takes away the Sting of Death, and makes his cold Embraces easie and tollerable; but a bad Life gives him double Arms against us; Power over us here and hereafter, in a more terrible and fearful second Death, a Death to all Eternity, though living to bear the unspeakable Terrors of it; excluded for ever from all that is God, except his Anger and fiery Indignation; the Consideration of which made the Prophet cry out, *Who can dwell with the everlasting Burnings?* and such must do it, who taste of the second Death, by falling into God's Displeasure by sinning, and heaping up wrath against the Day of Wrath; for our God, when he is angry, is a consuming Fire; nay, if his Anger be but a little kindled in his Breast, blessed are all they that trust in him; and if Sin makes the first Death so uneasie, it must necessarily render the second infinitely more intollerable.

For indeed, the Sting of Death is Sin, and no Terror is in this State like that which doth redound to us from a guilty Conscience, which has got us under hold, and will chastise

chastise us; for though in our Health and Jollitry we may pass it over lightly, yet in our Sick-Beds, when Death stares us ghastly in the Face, then the pains of Hell, as it were, gets hold on us, we are in Trouble and Heaviness, our Souls are as restless and uneasy as our Bodies; then, as the Prophet *Isaiah* says, *We are like a troubled Sea, that cannot rest, whose waters cast up dirt and mire* and again, *there is no peace*, saith my God, *to the wicked*; for in such a State, when we come to die, the greatest Melancholly that shall then seize our Spirits, will be from the heavy Load and Burthen of our Sins, that will be ready to oppress and sink our Souls.

Then we shall find that Threatning verified in us, *Psal. 50. 21. I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine Eyes*; and what Grief or Anguish can be comparable to that which redounds from this, when we are going hence? and when God, by visiting Sicknes, as his Messenger, gives us warning to remove, Must it not concern and afflict us, beyond all Thought and Expression, to consider, in such a Case, what Danger our Sins have brought us to? They hide God's Face and Mercy from us, and in our greatest need of Comfort and Support, threaten us with utter Ruin and Destruction

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Destruction, and nothing now can be so sharp and intollerable, as the Thoughts of a displeas'd and angry God; and well may that be so to us, which was the greatest of our Saviour's Troubles; for at his Dying Hour, the Guilt of all our Sins, pressing heavy upon his Soul, occasioned a bitter Agony, and that bitter Exclamation, *viz. My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me?* And most certainly, at the Dying Hour of all wicked Men and Women, the Sense of Guilt will be the bitterest Portion, and the very Dregs of the Cup of trembling; their Hearts will faint, and their Souls will sink within them; it will be with them, as with *Felix*, when *Paul* preached of Judgment to come; his Guilt through the fear of it, made him tremble. They shall shake and fear, and cry mightily, and have on them such passionate Concernment as is inexpressible, from the dismal Apprehensions of the Divine Wrath and Indignation which their Sins have kindled and provoked against them, even to cry out with *Cain*, *Their Punishment is greater than they can bear.*

Then whilst it is to day, Let us hear God's Voice, Calling to us to repent; Let us be up and doing his Will, least the night

of Death suddenly overtake us, in which no Man can work ; for in the Grave there is no Repentance ; as the Tree falls, so it lies ; as Death leaves us, so will Judgment find us : Which is the next and last thing pursuing my Text I propose to treat on, *viz.*

After this, the Judgment : We have a sure word for it, that after Death there is a Judgment.

I am, saith the Lord, the Resurrection and the Life, he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live : And whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die, St. John 11. 25, 26. And Holy Job says, *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the Earth ; And though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God ; Whom I shall see for my self, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another,* Job 19. 25, 26, 27.

This plainly proves, that after Death the Soul shall descend and unite again with the Body, and both at the sound of the last Trump shall arise together, to receive their Rewards for the works done in the Flesh, whether it be Good, or whether it be Evil ; for St. Paul says, 1 Cor. 15. 52, 53. *The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed ; for*

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*this corruptible must put on incorruption, and
this mortal must put on immortality.*

The Earth, Sea, and Hell shall be com-
pell'd to give up the Dead that are in them,
and they shall be gathered from the Four
Wiads under Heaven, and be caught up to
meet the Lord, Coming in the Air, ac-
companied with Ten Thousand Angels, to
judge the Inhabitants of the Earth, at whose
Presence its Foundations shall tremble, and
it shall be dissolv'd; the Elements shall
melt with fervent heat; the Stars shall fall;
the Sun be darkned, the Moon turned into
Blood; and the Heavens rowled up toge-
ther like a scrole, in that great and terri-
ble Day, when the Book shall be opened,
wherein all our Actions shall be written,
and we shall be judged out of it, according
to the things that are written therein; then
happy is it for him who has well improved
his Talent in this Life, he shall enter into
the Joy of his Lord with Praises, and clad
in shining Robes, crowned with Glory and
Honour, in everlasting Life, where all Tears
shall be wiped away from his Eyes, and he
shall see the abundant Recompence of his
labour in his Spiritual Warfare; for he
that is faithful has promised it.

But those that have been sloathful and
unpro-

unprofitable Servants, shall call in vain to for
the Rocks and Mountains to fall upon them, four
to hide them from the Face of the Lamb, two
and from the Face of him that sitteth on the he
Throne, but no hiding Place shall shield wh
them from his Wrath and fiery Indignati foll
on, which shall pursue them to Eternal to
Torments, upon pronouncing, *Go ye cur- I*
sed into everlasting fire, prepared for the de Ag
vil and his angels, where shall be woes and tur
lamentations, anguish and gnashing of teeth, m
where the worm never dieth, and the fire is th
not quenched. m

From which Torments God of his infi
nite Mercy deliver us all, by giving us I
Hearts for a timely Repentance, before we of
go hence; for the sake of his well-beloved ha
Son Jesus Christ, who shed his precious g
Blood, that redeemed us from Sin and eter th
nal Death, that we might live and reign N
with him evermore. *Amen.* fi
n

His last Speech, or pious Exhortations to his
Parishioners on his Death-Bed, Exhorting
them to a Godly Life.

AT the Close of this Sermon, a faint-
ness seized this good Divine, and as
he had predicted, it proved his last, and
served as a Comfortable Mourning-Dress
for

in to for his Funeral; for being led home, he
 them found his Illness increase, and in a Day or
 Lamb two, perceiving his Dissolution drew nigh,
 on the he sent for the chief of his Parishioners,
 shield who standing about his Bed, he made the
 gnati following Speech, or Farewel Exhortation
 terna to them.

My Beloved Parishioners, Finding by my
 Age, and more by a sensible decay of Na-
 ture, I have not long to stay with you, but
 must follow, as I hope, those blest Souls
 that are gone to the Bosom of Bliss before
 me. In the first place, to do all the Good
 I can whilst I live, I commend the perusal
 of my Last Sermon to you, to which end I
 have given order it shall be printed for the
 general Benefit; and particularly of you
 that have heard it delivered from my
 Mouth; and being so suitable to the Occa-
 sion, I may well term it my *Funeral Ser-
 mon*. In the next place, I desire you ear-
 nestly to repent you of your Sins, and
 bring up your Children in the fear of the
 Lord. In the third place, Let your dying
 Pastor prevail with you to live in Love and
 Unity with one another, and be charitable
 to the Poor, comfort the Afflicted, and so
 you will bring down a Blessing on your
 selves, and your Posterity. Fourthly, Put
 not

not Death far away from your Thoughts as a thing at a distance, but strive to be always prepared for it, for we know not the Hour of its Coming; seeing when we think it farthest off, it often is nearest a hand, and too sadly surprizes many, like a Thief in the Night. And now what else remains, I hope a good Man succeeding me in this Cure, will not fail to instruct every one of you, as occasion shall require.

And now the Blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit, Three Persons, and One God, be with you, and remain with you, to your Lives ends, *Amen.*

This he expressed so affectionately, as made them weep over so good a dying Man. After these Exhortations he proceeded to repeat the following Prayer.

His Prayer.

O Eternal God! Father of Spirits, Everlasting King of Glory, look down with the Eyes of thy infinite Goodness and Mercy, to me thy poor and unworthy Servant, lying on my Bed of Sickness, preparing to come unto thee; strengthen me against the Fears and Terrors of Death, and give me a steadfast Faith and Hope to overcome all the subtle Temptations of Satan, that in this last En-
counter

counter he suggests to stagger my Confidence in
 thee. O let me remain sure grounded, and
 suffer me to place it no where else but in thee ;
 that living I may be thine , or dying I may be
 thine ; and ever praise and magnifie thy Holy
 Name, for all thy Mercies ; through the Me-
 rits and Mediation of Jesus Christ, my ever
 blessed Saviour and Redeemer. Amen.

After this , fetching some Sighs, with
 lifted up hands, he put up the following
 ejaculations.

His last pious Ejaculations.

O Lord ! thou hast been my Refuge from
 my Youth, and under thy everlast-
 ing Arm is my Covering and my Salvation.
 As the Hart panteth after the Water-brook,
 my Soul thirsteth for the Living God.

I am in a straight between two, but my
 desire is to be dissolved and be with Christ.

O how amiable are thy Tabernacles ;
 thou Lord of Hosts ! and how blessed are
 they that dwell therein.

Why art thou so heavy, O my Soul !
 and why art thou so disquieted within me !
 put thy Trust in God, and he shall deliver
 thee from the Power of the Enemy.

Death is swallowed up in Victory. O
 Death ! Where is thy Sting ? O Grave !
 where is thy Victory ? Thanks be to God,
 who

who giveth me the Victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

I have fought the Fight, I have finished my Course, I have kept the Faith, and from this Day is laid up for me a Crown of Glory.

These last words he brought forth with a pleasing smile, and then fainting, he said Lord Jesus into thy hands I commend my Spirit, and so sweetly died ; at the Departure of whose Soul, there was such a harmonious Sound heard, as made those present fall on their Knees and give Praise to God for all his Mercies.

As for the Sermon before set down, the Parishioners were earnest to have it preached from his Notes at his Funeral, before it came abroad, and prevail'd with his Relations accordingly, the Auditors being very numerous : and thus passed this painful Pious Divine, from this troublesome Life, to an endless one in Glory,

F I N I S.

Christian Reader,

If that these weighty Considerations should be reckoned not worth laying out one Penny, be pleased to read it *Gratis*, keep it clean, and return it in two Hours.